

# TV CANDIDS

by Terrence O'Flaherty

If television has done nothing else, it has certainly brought the average American closer than ever before to his own body. There hasn't been a human ailment that hasn't been thoroughly diagnosed, inspected, knifed and cured—before our very eyes.

"Where do you hurt today, honey?" asks the housewife. Years ago her husband would have been vague about it. Today, if he's been doing his homework on TV, he not only knows where he hurts, but knows what the symptoms indicate and his chances for survival.

My doctor tells me that some of the diseases his patients complain about he hasn't even heard of himself. He hadn't been watching television.

My neighbor, Mrs. Pellachotti, watches all the medical shows with the same kind of mixed feelings of guilt and superiority with which she reads the obituaries.

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She watches jealously and spends the rest of the evening feeling herself all over to see if maybe she might be getting the same disease. During the night she has developed the symptoms and at 9:30 the next morning she is calling the doctor to see about an appointment.

I have known her arteries to harden overnight. This is not easy. Just ask your physician.

There has been some great progress in her medical problems, however. There was a time when she would have been satisfied with worrying over something comparatively simple like appendicitis or Bright's Disease. Today, through the magic of television, she has upgraded her ailments considerably.

She has a particular affinity for "murmurs" and "lumps." To hear her complain, the former are strong enough to jolt the University of California seismograph.

"Did you see that medical show last night?" she is likely to ask. "Just feel this and see if you think it's something serious..."

And before you know it she is guiding your hand over some danger spot.

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Mrs. Pellachotti contracted a cancer virus last year while watching Dr. Wendell Stanley, the noted virologist.

I'm sure the doctor will be happy to know that she was cured the following evening after seeing Dr. Kildare treat an arthritic patient. Almost immediately her cancer turned into one of the worst cases of arthritis on record.

To date, her doctor and I have pulled her through five kinds of imaginary heart troubles, leukemia, breast cancer, several respiratory ailments and African sleeping sickness.

The truth is, Mrs. Pellachotti is as healthy as an ox and is likely to stay that way until the day she dies.

And it's no wonder. She's been examined for every disease known to the Drs. Kildare and Casey put together.

LIFE'S LIKE THAT By FRED NEHER



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